

REMARKS

The Decision on Appeal has stated that the rejections of Claims 1, 2, 4-14, 16-18, 24, 26, 27, 29, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been affirmed. Further, the Decision on Appeal has stated the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-14, 16-18, 24, 26, 27, 29, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, has been reversed.

In response to the affirmation of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), applicant has amended the independent claims to further distinguish applicant's claim language by incorporating numerous limitations similar to those deemed allowable in related U.S. Patent Application No. 10/633,004, as follows:

“wherein the bond pad is only disposed above an outer periphery of an input/output (I/O) bus of the active circuit” (see this or similar, but not necessarily identical language in the independent Claims 1, 16, and 18);

“wherein the top metal layer is only disposed above an outer periphery of the input/output (I/O) bus of the active circuit” (see Claim 17);

“wherein an interconnect metal layer of the metal layer is electrically coupled to a plurality of underlying metal layers by way of vias, the plurality of underlying metal layers disposed at least in part below the active circuit” (see this or similar, but not necessarily identical language in the independent Claims 1, 16, and 18);

“wherein the interconnect metal layer interconnects the bond pad with the plurality of underlying metal layers” (see Claims 1, 16, and 18);

“wherein the interconnect metal layer interconnects the top metal layer with the plurality of underlying metal layers” (see Claim 17);

“wherein the interconnect metal layer of the metal layer defines an island, the island including a plurality of openings, the openings defining a plurality of substantially

linear first portions and a plurality of substantially linear second portions which intersect, where interconnect vias formed in rows along a length of at least the first portions provide communication between the interconnect metal layer and the bond pad” (see Claims 1, 16, and 18);

“wherein the interconnect metal layer defines an island, the island including a plurality of openings, the openings defining a plurality of substantially linear first portions and a plurality of substantially linear second portions which intersect, where interconnect vias formed in rows along a length of at least the first portions provide communication between the interconnect metal layer and the top metal layer” (see Claim 17);

“wherein the openings are adapted for facilitating an interlock between the interconnect metal layer of the metal layer and an inter-metal dielectric layer disposed between the metal layer and the bond pad” (see Claims 1, 16, and 18); and

“wherein the openings are adapted for facilitating an interlock between the interconnect metal layer and the inter-metal dielectric layer disposed between the metal layer and the top metal layer” (see Claim 17).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the independent claims are deemed allowable for at least similar reasons to those noted in the aforementioned related case.

To this end, all of the independent claims are deemed allowable. Moreover, the remaining dependent claims are further deemed allowable, in view of their dependence on such independent claims.

In the event a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at (408) 505-5100. The

Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to
Deposit Account No. 50-1351 (Order No. NVIDP235).

Respectfully submitted,
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